

Tobacco and the prospect of selling it at Washington & its neighbourhood—As I am engaged in the purchase of State and continental paper—I would receive Securities of every description in payment—which I should suppose would facilitate the Sale—

Hoping to hear from you shortly I am

Dear Sir

Your Obedient Servant

WILLIAM STEELE

Addressed: John Gray Blount Esquire
Merchant
Washington

John Cowper¹⁷ to John Gray and Thomas Blount

PORTSMOUTH Jan^y 16th. 1790

Mess^{rs}. Jn^o G & Th^o Blount
Gentlemen.

From an unexpected demand from Europe Indian Corn is like to take a Considerable rise here tho a fall Crop, and hearing that Article was low with you I have Thought it expedient to give you this Information, If you Incline to Make a Speculation¹⁸ I will be half Interested in the purchase of 4 or 5000 barrels If it can be had to Cost del^d here not more than 10/ this Money but If it does not exceed 6/ Virg^a. Curr^y with you the Spec^a. [speculation] will Still be better—The payments to be made in 8 Weeks from the receipt of the Corn in N^o Carolina 3 Months Will do better this Credit Effected we can go into the Speculation without an Advance of Cash. for here it Will Command I have no doubt 13/4 P barr^l. If not 15/ from this till the [2] first of May—The business here I will do free of Commisⁿ and you in the Purchase to Charge none. let me hear from you by return of post On the Subject, and If you give into the Specⁿ the moment you have effected your purchase apprise Me and at What period it can be del^d. here and Weather you Can Command Craft otherwise I can Charter and Send round

¹⁷ John Cowper was a merchant and shipper of Portsmouth, Virginia. See letters from him in *The John Gray Blount Papers*, I.

¹⁸ John Gray Blount and George Nicolson, a member of the firm Pennock, Nicolson, and Skipwith of Richmond, Virginia, were also engaged in a speculation in corn.